

Radon **Action** **Week**

October 15-21, 2000

*New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Radiation Protection Programs
Bureau of Environmental Radiation
Radon Section*

Radon Action Partnership: Activities for Radon Action Week and Throughout the Year

Thank you for your interest in being a partner in New Jersey's radon outreach efforts. Radon causes approximately 500 lung cancer cases each year in New Jersey -- resulting in deaths that could have been prevented by testing and mitigation of homes. Your efforts can help prevent radon-related lung cancer in your community.

Following are some examples of cost-effective strategies used by municipalities in the past for increasing local radon awareness:

- o Brief articles or announcements on radon can be included in municipal newsletters and local newspapers. Articles in municipal newsletters appear to be a particularly cost-effective way to raise local awareness of radon.**
- o Mayors or other local leaders can test their homes for radon, and invite local media to cover the story.**

- o Mayors and schools superintendents can distribute memoranda to municipal and school employees encouraging them to test.**
- o Radon displays can be set up at malls or popular retail stores, local libraries, supermarkets, public schools, the town hall or other public areas where many people pass by. The display can simply be a poster with radon information cards tacked up, or it can be a table with a stand-up poster and a quantity of radon materials available to be picked up. (The owner/manager of the location should be contacted for permission to set up the display.)**
- o Civic groups, clubs, religious organizations, etc., can be asked to make announcements at their regular meetings about the importance of radon testing in the community. A brief statement could be included with newsletters and bulletins, such as "Radon causes hundreds of lung cancer deaths in New Jersey each year. To protect your family, remember to test your home for radon. Radon reduction systems can be easily installed where needed. Test kits can be purchased at many hardware stores and local health departments or contact the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) at 1-800-648-0394 for a list of certified radon companies."**
- o The Chamber of Commerce or other civic groups that provide 'welcome kits' to new residents can be asked to include radon information cards in the kits.**
- o Hospitals and doctors' offices can display radon posters and other informational materials in their waiting rooms.**
- o Hospitals or health departments could promote radon awareness along with other health activities such as maternity, blood screening or immunization programs.**
- o Speakers can be provided to civic and other organizations to make presentations at their regular meetings, using the radon videotape or slide show provided by the NJDEP.**
- o Hardware stores or other stores in the community may be willing to make up their own display on radon using posters and handouts.**
- o Find out if your health department provides test kits at reduced prices**

(some do), and publicize this fact through flyers or media releases.

- o Scout troops or other youth groups might be interested in distributing radon information, perhaps door-to-door. Getting young people involved is particularly effective because they bring home the message to their families.**
- o Contacts can be made with local radio and television stations to see if they would develop or air public service announcements (PSAs) on radon. PSAs can be obtained from the NJDEP for television and radio or can be developed using local personalities. Similarly, written PSAs can be placed in newspapers.**

Sample Proclamation

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer, causing as many as 500 lung cancer deaths annually in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, elevated radon levels are found in many homes and pose a serious health threat to families residing in these homes; and

WHEREAS, any home may have high levels of radon -- even if neighboring homes do not; and

WHEREAS, radon testing is easy and inexpensive -- and elevated levels of radon can be effectively reduced at the cost of a typical home repair; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of homes in [municipality name] have elevated levels of radon;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [Mayor's name], Mayor of [municipality name], on behalf of the [municipality name] Town Council and residents of [municipality name], do hereby proclaim the week [or month] of _____, 20__, as

RADON ACTION WEEK

in the Township of [municipality name] and call upon all residents who have not yet tested to test their homes for radon and to reduce radon levels if elevated levels are found, to protect their families from the serious health risk of radon.

Signed this ____th day of _____, 20__.

[Mayor's name]

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: [Name & Phone
Number]**

[Municipality name] ANNOUNCES RADON ACTION WEEK

[Your community, state, date] -- [Mayor's name] announced today that [dates] has been designated Radon Action Week by [municipality], in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Radon Program.

In announcing Radon Action Week [Mayor's name] said, "Radon is a serious health risk. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer -- and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. But because radon is invisible and odorless it is easy to ignore this potential hazard in our own homes."

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally when uranium and radium break down in the soil and in rock formations. Radon gas moves up through the soil and finds its way into homes through cracks in the foundation and openings around pumps, pipes and drains.

"A significant number [or __% (the percentage can be found in the NJDEP Radon Tier Report – call 1-800-648-0394)] of homes in [municipality name] are predicted to be above the acceptable limits for radon," [Mayor or other official] said. "We would like to see as many homes tested as possible, to reduce the radon risk in [municipality name]."

During Radon Action Week, [municipality name] will provide radon information at the following locations and events: [List areas where information will be available, and any radon-related events, such as presentations].

Radon is measured in picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. The average U.S. indoor level is about 1.3 pCi/L. At 4 pCi/L, the risk of lung cancer from radon is greater than the risk from fire or other home accidents. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the NJDEP recommend that action be

taken to reduce radon levels if the level in the home is greater than or equal to 4 pCi/L.

Fortunately, testing for radon is simple and inexpensive. The NJDEP's Radon Information Line at 1-800-648-0394 provides a list of certified companies that provide testing services or do-it-yourself test kits. Test kits can also be obtained from many hardware stores and health departments. [Mention if the local health department sells test kits].

If the test indicates a radon problem, radon mitigation systems can be installed at a cost similar to that of other home repairs. A list of certified mitigation companies is also available from 1-800-648-0394.

For more information on radon, contact [municipality contact and phone number] or the NJDEP Radon Information Line at 1-800-648-0394.

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Sample Public Service Announcements

NEWSPAPER/NEWSLETTER PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public service announcements (PSAs) can be sent to local newspapers, or included in the municipal or other local newsletter.

#1

Have YOU tested YOUR home for radon yet? Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer. It is found in all homes, but in some homes reaches high levels that can be a health hazard. Because radon is invisible and odorless, only testing will tell you if your home has a problem. Test kits can be purchased in many hardware stores and health departments, or call the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Radon Program at 1-800-648-0394 for a list of certified companies who provide testing services and kits.

#2

Question -- What's a five letter word for something that is in your home, is invisible and can cause lung cancer? Answer -- RADON. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is found in all homes, but in some homes reaches high levels that can be a health hazard. If you haven't already tested for radon, protect your family by testing now. Test kits can be purchased in many hardware stores and health departments, or call the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Radon Program at 1-800-648-0394 for a list of certified companies who provide testing services and kits.

Sample Public Service Announcements (cont'd)

RADIO/TELEVISION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

These can be adapted to your community, put on your letterhead and sent to local radio stations for airing as a PSA. You may want to ask local cable or broadcast television stations if they would be willing to develop a television PSA using the text of one of these announcements.

:60 SPOT

RADON IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF LUNG CANCER, AFTER CIGARETTE SMOKING. AND IT IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF LUNG CANCER AMONG NON-SMOKERS.

RADON OCCURS NATURALLY IN THE SOIL AND CAN AFFECT ANY HOME. EVEN IF YOUR NEIGHBORS HAVE TESTED AND DID NOT HAVE A RADON PROBLEM, YOUR HOME MAY STILL HAVE DANGEROUS LEVELS.

FORTUNATELY RADON TESTING IS EASY AND INEXPENSIVE. TEST KITS CAN BE PURCHASED AT MANY LOCAL HARDWARE STORES AND HEALTH DEPARTMENTS, OR CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AT 1-800-648-0394 FOR A LIST OF CONTRACTORS THAT PROVIDE TESTING SERVICES AND KITS.

ONCE IDENTIFIED, RADON PROBLEMS CAN BE FIXED - FOR NO MORE THAN THE COST OF A TYPICAL HOME REPAIR.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RADON TESTING AND RADON REPAIRS, CALL THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AT 1-800-648-0394, OR [local office and phone number].

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE RISK OF LUNG CANCER - TAKE THE SIMPLE STEP OF TESTING YOUR HOME FOR RADON. YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!

THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN A PUBLIC SERVICE OF THIS STATION AND [organization].

:30 SPOT

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FORTUNATELY RADON TESTING IS EASY AND INEXPENSIVE. AND ONCE IDENTIFIED, RADON PROBLEMS CAN BE FIXED.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RADON, RADON TESTING AND RADON REPAIRS, CALL THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AT 1-800-648-0394, OR [local office and phone number].

THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN A PUBLIC SERVICE OF THIS STATION AND [organization].

RADON ACTION PARTNERSHIP

The order form below lists materials available free of charge from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. To prevent waste, please order only what you will use -- feel free to place a second order if you run out. If you have questions or suggestions, contact Judy Morgan, Radon Outreach Coordinator, at 1-800-648-0394. Thanks for your interest in maintaining awareness of radon as a public health concern!

ORDER FORM

**No. of
Copies**

Item

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | Radon informational card - 3 2/3" x 8 1/2" - Contains basic facts on radon and radon information phone number. (Maximum per order: 200 copies) |
| _____ | "Take the Radon Test" – flyer with basic information about radon (Maximum per order: 200 copies) |
| _____ | Reprint of EPA article on "EPA's Radon Policy Explained", describing the basis of the current guidelines. (Maximum per order: 50 copies) |
| _____ | Poster (NJDEP) - 11" x 17" - Illustration with very brief description of radon issue, for posting in public places. (Maximum per order: 5 copies) |
| _____ | "Testing Your Home for Radon" (NJDEP) - 10 minute videotape on basic radon information. (Maximum per order: 5 copies) |
| _____ | Radon pens – ballpoint pens with Radon Program phone number and website imprinted (Maximum per order: 50) |

NJDEP speakers on radon are also available through 1-800-648-0394.

Your Mailing Address:

Municipality Name:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Return form to: Judy Morgan, Radon Outreach Program, NJDEP Bureau of Environmental Radiation, P.O. Box 415, Trenton, NJ 08625-0415, 1-800-648-0394.

RADON ACTION PARTNERSHIP AWARD PROGRAM

The NJDEP Radon Program intends to present awards to communities with outstanding radon outreach programs during the year 2000.

Does your community have an active radon education program? If so, we invite you to complete the following and return it by January 30, 2001 to: Judy Morgan, NJDEP Radon Program, P.O. Box 415, Trenton, NJ 08625-0415.

Municipality Name:

Address:

Phone Number

Contact Name and Phone Number

Please describe your community's radon outreach program during the year 2000. Include a brief discussion of what aspects you felt were most successful, and why they worked best. Feel free to use additional pages if needed.